

The CASE of the Poor Skippers and Keel-men of NEW-CASTLE, Truly Stated :

W I T H

Some REMARKS on a Printed Paper, call'd and pretended
to be their CASE.

SO much Falshood and so many Mistakes are contain'd in a Printed Paper, pretended to be *The Case of the Poor Skippers and Keel-men of Newcastle*; that one who knows little of these Poor Men, their Condition and Circumstance, from what is there suggested, would readily apprehend nothing less to be design'd by by the BILL now depending, than the Oppression of them, and the Misapplication of their Charity. In Compassion therefore to these poor Labouring People, who may be Sufferers, thro' what hath lately been offer'd as their *Case*, by a Mercenary Writer well acquainted with some Instances of the Wasting and Misapplying their Money, Collected for better Ends; what follows, on their Behalf, is humbly offer'd with strict Truth, well supported by undeniable Evidence ready to be produc'd.

The *Skippers* and *Keel-men* Employ'd on the River *Tyne*, are in Number about 1600, very few of which, if any, during the Season of their Employment, live without the Liberties of *Newcastle*, from which Place they and their Families have always receiv'd great Benevolence, and many Charities.

The Corporation, many Years since, at its own Expence, Erected a *Chapel*, and Establish'd therein Reading of Prayers, Preaching and Catechizing, for the Benefit of them, their Wives and Children, the latter of which are taught *gratis*, by Schol-Masters appointed, and very liberally Rewarded by the Town for that Service.

These and many other great Kindnesses, constantly shewn 'em by the Town, such as Yearly Cloathing many of their Poor of all Ages, and Relieving more with other Charities, their own being very insufficient for Supporting the Number of those that Want, induced them, as some of the better sort of 'em have own'd, to think of doing somewhat for themselves; in order to which, they resolv'd upon making such Deductions out of their Wages, as are mention'd in the *Bill*, to be apply'd towards Building of an *Hospital*; and in the Year 1699 did Petition the Corporation for Ground on which to Build the same.

The Town very readily comply'd with their Petition, granting them Ground; and the Deductions, according to their Agreement, were made and continu'd 'till the Year 1704; in which Time was Collected and Disburs'd, in the Building, and other Charitable Uses, the Sum of 2350 *l.* 03 *s.* 10 *d.* $\frac{3}{4}$. The Management at that time being under the Magistrates of *Newcastle*, assisted by the Governor and Two Wardens of the *Hoast men's* Company.

Soon after this, some Turbulent-spirited Persons among the *Skippers* and *Keel-men*, desirous of having the Money into their own Hands, raised divers ill-grounded Clamours against the Two Wardens, who had Receiv'd and Pay'd their Money, without any Reward for their Trouble: Upon which being weary of that Service, quitted it, Passing their Accounts to the intire Satisfaction of the late Sir *William Blackett*, nam'd in that Paper, and the other Magistrates of that Corporation.

Another Person was appointed for that Service, who continu'd One Year in it, having in that Time Receiv'd between 3 and 400 *l.* applying the same to the Uses for which it was Collected: But this proving a Disappointment to some Ill-designing Men among them, who cou'd not be satisfy'd unless they had the Fingering of the Money, in order to Dispose of it at their Pleasure, they appointed a Steward, or Clerk, who better pleas'd them.

In some time after, the wiser and honefter sort of them, weary of this Management, and being truly sensible of the great Misapplication made of their Charitable Contributions, the greatest Part of which was consum'd in Riotting, Drunkenness, and other unnecessary Expences, did Petition the Mayor of *Newcastle*, and the Governor of the *Hoast-men's*

men's Company, to use their Endeavours towards procuring an Act of Parliament for Perpetuating and Settling their Charity.

The Mayor and Governor did accordingly Petition the *House of Commons*, and obtain'd Leave for the bringing in a *Bill* for that End: But that Session of Parliament being too near an End to Pass the *Bill* into an *Act*, nothing was then done.

The same ill Management continuing, and the Wants of the Poor in the *Hospital* encreasing, whereby they were reduced to a Starving Condition, and common Repairs, &c. wanting; the greatest part of the *Skippers* and *Keel-men*, in Compassion to themselves and their Poor, did the last Year renew their Petition to the Magistrates of *Newcastle*, praying them to procure an Act of Parliament for Settling their Charity, and the Government of their *Hospital*: Who accordingly did Petition for Leave to bring in the *Bill* now depending.

The Stater of their *pretended Case* can tell, if he pleases, how much Money was shamefully squeez'd out of these poor deluded People, towards obtaining a Charter of Incorporation; and how little was done for them, after they had parted with their Money.

It is very falsly suggested, that the Petition of these poor Men was obtain'd by any undue Practices: One of the Worthy Representatives in Parliament for that Town having good reason to believe the contrary, from what he knows attested upon the Oaths of some of them.

He is likewise very unlucky, in so confidently affirming, that their Petition to Her Majesty was Sign'd by above a Thousand of them: It is now remaining with Mr. Attorney-General, to whom it was referr'd, and is only Sign'd by *Ker* their Steward, and Two other Persons.

The *Bill*, as it now stands, will effectually cure most of the Mischiefs he complains of, and, for the future, prevent many such Tumultuous Riots as have frequently been raised and continued, by the Misapplication of that Charity-Money. The Truth of which wou'd appear, from the Account of Money squander'd away in *June* and *July* 1710, in supporting these Men who now oppose this *Bill*, in a Tumult then raised, to the entire Stop of the Coal-Trade, and cou'd not be suppress'd by any other Means than Her Majesty's being pleas'd to Order the Lord *Illy's* Regiment from *Hull* to *Newcastle*.

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